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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, January 30, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "FINISHING TOUCHES FOR CANNED FOODS." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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One of those old, well-traveled stories that you often hear told on the bride begins with an account of the young husband who comes home at the end of the day, tired and hungry, only to find not one sign of dinner anywhere and his wife doing nothing but wringing her hands in helpless despair. When he inquires why she has made no move toward getting their evening meal, she explains that she has lost her can opener.

I've always suspected that this was one of those far-fetched, man-made jokes. And I think the answer to it might be that when the bride found her can opener, she had dinner on the table in less than a jiffy.

Please don't draw the conclusion from this that I'm in favor of any household's living on canned food exclusively. Far from it. But you know and I know that there are certain situations that arise in every home when a supply of different kinds of canned food on the pantry shelf comes in handy. For example, when you have very little time to prepare a meal. And then again, when company drops in and you have to stretch your meal to feed the whole group. Or, in winter when fresh foods are expensive and hard to get. Or, finally, when you live at a distance from a market and have to store food in advance. These seem to me four good illustrations of the convenience of canned goods -- whether commercially canned or garden food put up at home.

Well, even in the use of ready-prepared food, it's a good idea to know some little tricks of seasoning that will add variety to the dish and do away with that bugbear -- monotony.

I think you'll be interested in some ideas for touching up canned foods which come straight from Dr. Florence King who is in charge of food utilization work at the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington, D. C.

Dr. King says, "Commercially canned foods are seasoned for the tastes of a majority of people, but every family has certain preferences in seasonings which only the homemaker can meet. Some of us like very hot seasonings, or garlic, or cheese, or spices, and some of us don't. The home cook can take many kinds of canned foods and add touches of her own that make the dish for her particular family."

Here are some of the finishing touches she suggests for canned beans. "When you warm up canned baked beans, try for a change putting a little bit of mustard and molasses with them. Canned string beans are excellent if you heat



them with a ham bone or a piece of bacon. You can season lima beans the same way. Many people also like limas with a little curry, or with onion. Of course, onion is a flavoring that goes well with any kind of canned bean and with many other canned vegetables."

As for canned peas, here's a novelty-flavor for them. Try adding a mint leaf to the saucepanful. Some cooks add a teaspoon of sugar to vegetables that are naturally a little sweet -- to a can of corn, or succotash, or peas.

You can transform plain everyday canned tomato juice into a flavorful cocktail by adding grated horseradish, onion and celery. And you can make canned spinach taste very different by adding a few drops of lemon or shaking a bit of nutmeg over it. You know, the distinctive flavor in French creamed spinach comes from nutmeg or mace.

Many people don't realize how many different dishes they can make from canned sweetpotatoes. You can fry sweetpotatoes right out of the can, or you can candy them. You can also mash them or make them into scalloped combination dishes. Butter and other fat or brown sugar are the usual seasonings. But if you want variety in a baked dish of sweetpotatoes, you can add sliced apple or crushed pineapple, raisins, grated orange rind, or marshmallows on top.

You can also depend on sauces to help make canned foods interesting. Of course, Hollandaise sauce is an old favorite for asparagus -- canned or fresh. And sweet-sour sauce makes beets extra good. If you buy whole canned hominy, you can serve it with cheese sauce, tomato sauce or Spanish sauce. Tomato or Spanish sauce are also good with canned fish -- canned tuna, or salmon, and canned beef or chicken.

And speaking of canned meat, you have a large choice of seasonings to add to it. If you like peppery seasonings, add black pepper or cayenne, or tabasco, Worcestershire or chili sauce. In a canned meat stew or soup, you can add such herbs as bay, thyme, sage, celery leaves, or salt and parsley. Curry powder is good with canned meat. Many people like a trace of garlic with it. Canned beef is good cooked with salt meat like salt pork or ham or bacon. Then there's that Chinese soy sauce for seasoning. And finally, there are mushrooms, tomatoes, onions and other vegetables which add flavor.

We haven't mentioned the canned fruits so far. And many of these you can make different and delicious by very simple finishing touches. Sometimes a few drops of lemon juice bring out an otherwise mild flavor as in canned pears, figs or cherries. Crystallized ginger or ginger root goes well with canned pears, just as cinnamon or nutmeg flavor does with prunes and apple sauce, and mint with canned cherries. Mint, by the way, is also good with canned pears and grapefruit, when you serve these chilled in a fruit cup. You can use a fresh mint leaf or a white mint candy dissolved in the fruit juice. If you're serving canned fruit hot, a little butter adds flavor. You'll find this true when you prepare broiled canned peaches or apricots, and when you fry pineapple slices.





None of these last-minute touches take much time, yet they may make a great deal of difference in the success of your meal. And that reminds me. I have a quick-and-easy menu for you -- a menu for a rush day featuring canned food. The main dish is creamed salmon -- the salmon out of a can. Boiled potatoes to go with the creamed salmon, and canned green beans seasoned with butter or a bit of bacon. Salad? How about canned asparagus served on lettuce with French dressing? For dessert, canned pears or peaches flavored with mint and a few drops of lemon juice.

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